

OUR NATIONAL LIBRARY.

Its Establishment Was Due Primarily to Thomas Jefferson.

Condensed History of the Great Collection's Origin and Growth—The New Library Building and Its Architect.

[Special Washington Letter.] Statistical letters are generally conceded to be less interesting than narrations of current or past events; nevertheless, statistical statements are sometimes regarded as of exceptional value by the average reader throughout the country.

Statistical letters usually refer both to facts and figures, but are generally overburdened with more figures than facts. This letter, concerning the origin, growth and development of the celebrated congressional library, will contain facts which many readers will want to keep in their scrap books, and



AINSWORTH R. SPOFFORD.

It is hoped that the narration will at the same time prove to be somewhat interesting.

The United States is a beneficent government, particularly so in the matter of literature. "The glory of a country is its authors," and, in the matter of authors, America bids fair to rival the world if she continues as she has begun. Irving, Cooper, Bancroft, Prescott, Longfellow, Whittier, Bryant, Poe, Lowell and hosts of others have placed our literature high in the rank of the world's productions. If we have not as yet produced an author whose works equal those of Homer, Shakespeare or Milton, we have at least our Longfellow, the quality of whose works will fall not far behind that of the masters.

In the year 1800 the United States government was as yet in its infancy. Congress then convened in Philadelphia, but the corner stone of the new capitol at Washington had been laid, the north wing finished; and at its first session the propriety of holding the next session there was decided upon by the members of the Sixth congress.

At this session a provisional appropriation of \$500 was made, which appropriation was to be used in the purchase of books to form the nucleus of a library at Washington, which should perhaps one day not only be the first in our country, but be second to none in the world. The collection thus formed was placed in a room assigned for the purpose in the capitol building at Washington.

The establishment of the library was notably due to Thomas Jefferson; and, having been so favorably started, congress made appropriations from time to time for its increase and maintenance until the British entered Washington in 1814 and destroyed the whole. To make good this loss congress in the year 1815 appropriated \$25,000 for the purchase of the Jefferson collection of 7,700 volumes. George Watterson was appointed librarian at a salary of \$1,000 and the library again begun.

On the 3d day of December, 1818, congress made an appropriation of \$2,000 for the purchase of books for the new library, and from 1820 to 1823 \$6,600 were appropriated.

Again, on the 26th day of May, 1824, congress made a similar appropriation of \$5,000, and an additional one of \$1,543 for furniture to be used in the library room.

On the 11th of February, 1825, congress passed an act directing that the secretary of the treasury should remit all duties on such books, maps and charts "as have been during the present year or may hereafter be imported into the United States by the authority of the joint committee of congress for the use of the library of congress."

On the 25th of February, 1825, another act was passed appropriating \$5,000 for books for the congressional library, and from that time until the fire of 1851 congress made annual appropriations for the increase of the library, as follows:

On March 3, 1825, \$5,000 for the purchase of books and \$925 for coal and stoves.

On March 2, 1827, \$3,000 for books and \$400 for the employment of an assistant.

On May 24, 1828, \$5,000 were added for the purchase of books and the librarian authorized to employ an assistant at a salary of \$800 per annum.

A resolution passed May 24, 1828, provided that "duplicates, imperfect, damaged or other works not wanted may be removed from the library."

On the 25th of May, 1829, Andrew Sentenives, and a few other privileged characters; but on the 30th day of January, 1830, congress passed a resolution granting the privileges of the library to the following officials:

The secretary of state, the secretary of the treasury, the secretary of war, the secretary of the navy, the postmaster-general, the secretary of the senate, the clerk of the house of representatives, the chaplain of congress and any individual in the district who may have been president of the United States.

The usual annual appropriations for many years after the accession of Jackson were \$5,000, exclusive of expenditures for the law library and contingent expenses—for a law library had grown in connection with the regular one, since which time, having received an annual appropriation of about \$1,000, it

has come to be one of the best equipped law libraries in the country.

The regular library again received an appropriation in 1832 of \$3,000, for furniture and repairs.

In 1848 the new library received a bonus of \$2,412 for its enlargement; and in 1850 the usual appropriation of \$1,000 for the same was increased to \$2,000 by act of congress.

By 1851 the library of congress had become the pride of the nation, having increased to 55,000 volumes; but again sustained a check by the fire of December 24 of that year, when 35,000 volumes were destroyed.

Congress immediately made an appropriation of \$10,000 to replace this loss, and again, in 1852, another appropriation of \$72,000 for the repairs of the library room, and \$75,000 for the purchase of books to make good the loss of those destroyed by the fire.

John J. Stephenson was appointed librarian of congress in 1851 by Abraham Lincoln. He only remained in office three years, when, upon his resignation, A. R. Spofford, the present incumbent, was appointed.

It is needless to recite the various acts of congress whereby additions of books have been made to the library; the most notable one being the Smithsonian collection (then numbering 4,000 volumes, but now 300,000, or almost one-half of the stock of the whole national library), whereby the most valuable collection of scientific books extant has been added to the national library; for, by the Smithsonian system of exchange, whereby copies of their publications are exchanged with Jackson appointed John S. Meehan, of Washington, librarian of congress. He continued in office until the accession of Lincoln, and died at the advanced age of 72, having continued in office 32 years.

Heretofore the library had been for the exclusive use of senators and representatives, every scientific society on the face of the globe, they have obtained practically a complete library of all scientific works.

The library at this date contains upwards of 755,000 books, 250,000 pamphlets, 500,000 sheets of music, 25,000 maps and 26,000 engravings, photographs, lithographs, etchings, photo-gravures and pictorial illustrations in general. By this it will be seen that the library has outgrown its accommodations, for its room at the capitol only gives shelf space for 350,000. Because of the marvelous growth and development of the library, Librarian Spofford, in 1872, recognized the necessity for the rental, purchase or erection of a new building. He was diligently engaged for 14 years in the effort before a decisive act of congress permitted the corner stone of the present beautiful library building to be laid. A description of this architectural conception cannot be given in limited space; it stands preeminent over all public buildings, and is, without doubt or qualification, the greatest and most beautiful building in the world.

The work of removing the books from the present library room in the capitol will begin shortly, the transfer to be made by wagons and not by the small underground tunnel, as is currently believed. Shelves in the new library are now being correctly numbered in accordance with those in the capitol room, so as to prevent confusion.

The present librarian has been in charge of this great collection of liter-



NATIONAL LIBRARY. ("America," Decoration for Dome, by F. H. Blasfield.)

ary treasure for 33 years. Under the eyes of Ainsworth R. Spofford the library has grown from infancy to vigorous virility. Mr. Spofford was appointed by Abraham Lincoln in 1864, and has held his position without interruption or political intervention from that date until the present.

The new congressional library building, which is now being celebrated both in song and story, is the result of the continuous and persistent efforts on the part of Mr. Spofford to induce congress to make proper provision for the rapidly-accumulating wealth of learning.

Col. John L. Smithmeyer, of Austrian birth, came to this country in 1847, a well-equipped civil engineer, with considerable learning in architecture. To him was committed the task of preparing plans for the new library building which was authorized by congress. He did the work with exceptional skill, and everybody who has seen the work declares that the library is the most beautiful building on earth, not excepting Taj Mahal, the famous building of beauty on the upper Ganges, in India. Col. Smithmeyer never received pay from the government for his work, and now has a claim pending before congress for compensation for his intellectual labor. His claim will probably be like all other claims of that character. The government is not honest. It is not likely that Col. Smithmeyer will ever receive the compensation due him for his magnificent work.

SMITH D. FRY.

Ex-Ambassador Bayard has shipped his favorite English saddle horse to this country.

TENNESSEE CENTENNIAL

The Great Exposition Will Open Its Gates May 1.

A Scene of Splendor Whose Completeness Has Never Been Rivalled—General Reduction in Railroad Rates.

[Special Nashville (Tenn.) Letter.]

The Tennessee centennial at Nashville, considered as a spectacular effect, has one marked superiority to the late Columbian exposition at Chicago. In the white city there was no sense of depth. It was all foreground. In whatever direction one looked there was nothing whatever but lath and plaster, gilt and tinsel. Nowhere could one look out beyond the temporary splendor of the passing hour and rest one's imagination with a glimpse of the permanent and the historic. Now at Nashville things are different. Standing on the "Rialto" here and facing eastward one beholds a great white statue of Athena, beyond her the replica of the Parthenon, and beyond that and round about white arches, glittering domes, reaches of pale green waters, deep green stretches of lawn that have golden tones in the sunshine, brightness, lightness, long perspectives of white wall, shadowy darkness in arch after arch, a world of gleam and glitter, a fascinating, insubstantiality that has sprung suddenly out of the earth, and shall return whence it was digged. But this is not all. While standing on the Rialto wheel about and face eastward. The direction of the bridge is continued in a broad avenue that falls away straight in front of you among shelving lawns and scattered trees. It curves to the left and disappears. The eye, however, still ranges on. Bright sunshine and blue sky overhang a wide valley, and beyond the valley there are many houses. Among them low-lying clouds of smoke blend hazily with the blue of distance and billow upward along a ridge crowded with buildings. Here and there a tower shoots high above the haze. A spire top catches the sunlight and glitters like a jewel. Straight in front of you, at the very center of the view, crowning and dominating the whole vista, veiled a little by gray smoke, softened by the blue of the horizon and background by blue of heaven, there is uplifted against the clouds the historic state house of Tennessee.

The scenic value of this imaginative undertone, so to speak, which is possessed by the Nashville exposition, cannot be overestimated. So speaks Nathaniel Stephenson, of the Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, who visited the exposition grounds last week. In the course of a most brilliant piece of word painting he said: "And here in the midst of the battlefields, where Tennessee made such a valiant attempt to break from the strong bond of the national union, she is now celebrating her original entry into that estate. A new day is dawning, not only literally as the vision of the night fades away, while the shadows begin to lift, but figuratively, in the choice of the event to which this southern state asks all the world to do honor. If the darkness in the shadow of the Parthenon has its ghosts of war and ruin, the brightness that is succeeding it brings forth the white statue of Athena, and thus

"The old order changes, giving place to new, And God fulfills Himself in many ways." "But now the darkness of the night has changed imperceptibly to an altogether different one, the darkness of the dawn. You have not yet become aware of any increase of light. What you have realized is a vague, uncanny feeling, as if things fixed and immovable were slowly drawing near you. Large, dark shapes of buildings are stealing gradually into the range of vision. Great bulks of blackness take on form and distinctness and resolve themselves into towers, domes, porticoes. Bit by bit the very air itself is playing the same strange trick. The starshine is falling steadily nearer to the earth. A blue, never seen at any other hour of the 24 glimmers downward from the descending stars and makes the whole atmosphere one endless starry shimmer. This is neither night nor morning, but the most mysterious of all the hours, the hour before the dawn, when the ordinary conditions of life do not exist. You feel that you are no longer upon earth, but wandering about the streets of some dream city, tenanted by you known not what and located in some far place unexplored by man.

"The buildings loom vaster and vaster as the blue shimmer grows steadily deeper. The dome of the Agricultural building is crowned by the stars themselves. The tower of the auditorium springs away into the very heart of heaven. The pillars of the Parthenon have the height of mountains. The statue of Athena is some immeasurably vast creature which is not to be approached.

"And all these monsters of the dawn have the strange effect of being asleep. They are buildings no longer, they are living creatures wrapped in dead slumber, gazing eastward with sightless eyes, that will be awakened by the dawn. Perhaps it is the continuous though imperceptible changing of the degree of distinctness in their details, due to the steadily growing light in the heavens, that produces this uncanny effect of being alive. But however produced, it is there. So real is it that one catches one's self treading lightly for fear of waking these enormous creatures that are all about one."

In concluding his letter Mr. Stephenson says: "The men who conceived this building must have had qualities which it perpetuates, sweetness, nobility, loftiness, calmness, strength. There was Tennyson's ideal of

"That gentleness That when it weds with Manhood makes a man." "And looking at all this, at what the Parthenon signifies as well as what it

embodies, captivated by the matchless serenity of its charm, realizing its contrast to the Nineteenth century, one asks again: 'To what result is all this pageant of American material progress going forward?'

"And one turns hastily away lest one look too long upon the unattainable and lose heart and despair of his generation."

The great Remenyi apparently thinks in the same lines as Mr. Stephenson. They are both painters, artists of high renown, only one paints in music and the other in words. Both are poets, one with concord of sweet sounds, and the other with the rhythm of words. Remenyi says, as he stands tremblingly before the replica of the Parthenon: "Whose idea was this?" and when told that the idea originated with Maj. E. C. Lewis, the director-general, he said: "Where is he?"

The women who have made the woman's department an accomplished fact deserve more than passing mention. They have labored like heroes for nearly two years, and have spared neither time, money or exertion, to make their work a success of international character.

The president of the woman's board is Mrs. Van Leer Kirkman, a lady especially gifted for the office. Mrs. J. N. Brooks is chairman of the sales department, Mrs. James P. Drouillard is vice president of the board, Miss Ada Scott Rice is secretary, and Mrs. M. B. Pilcher is chairman of space and classification. The architect of the Woman's building is Mrs. Sara Ward Conley, artist, architect and art critic, who is a native of Nashville. Mrs. G. H. Ratterman, chairman of the patents' committee; Mrs. J. Hunter Orr, chairman decorative and applied art; Mrs. Ann Snyder, member of the general committee; Mrs. Paul McGuire, chairman of the ways and means committee.

The women's congresses will be a feature of the centennial. The congresses, while general, are already classified, so that those interested in a particular subject can attend a course without consuming much time. In the departments there are education, music, art, home and literature. The lectures will be free and are intended to be philanthropic in character. They are also intended to serve another purpose. They will afford a fitting theater in which a thinking public can see and listen to the eminent women of the state. Of those there are scores who through patience, industry and ability have attained distinction and who are entitled to be known and loved by the nation as well as by the commonwealth in whose interest they have served so long and well.

The meeting of the railway passenger men at Nashville, the other day, was watched with great interest, for it was known that the object of the meeting was to decide upon the rates to the Tennessee Centennial exposition. It was one of the most harmonious meetings ever held by that body, for they each knew that the motives that had prompted the enterprise were directed for the general good, and not for the benefit or aggrandizement of any individual or corporation.

The members of the passenger association, with the liberality that has always characterized their movements when the interests of the general public are concerned, determined to aid the Exposition association in their great work, and the consequence is that the rates are more advantageous, from every standpoint, than any that have ever been offered before. In fact, the fares have been placed at such a low figure that the Tennessee Centennial exposition, the national event of the current year, can be visited by everyone, for all obstacles have been removed.

It was agreed that the railway fares to the exposition should be placed on a sliding scale, and regulated by zones of from 25 to 50 miles each.

In the first zone of 50 miles the rate for the round trip will be 3 cents a mile.

From 51 to 100 miles, 2½ cents per mile.

From 101 to 150 miles, 2½ cents per mile.

From 151 to 200 miles, 2½ cents per mile.

From 201 to 275 miles, 2 cents per mile, with 50 cents added.

From 276 to 300 miles, 2 cents per mile, with 75 cents added.

From 301 to 350 miles, 2 cents per mile, with \$1.50 added.

The fare, however, is in no instance to exceed 80 per cent. of the rate one way, on the zones from 201 to 350 miles.

For military companies and bands in uniform, of 25 or more, the rate will be two cents a mile, plus arbitrary, for the round trip. The same rate applies to schools, when accompanied by teachers. These rates limit the use of tickets to seven days after the date of issue.

A rate of one cent per mile, each way, short line mileage, plus arbitrary, for the Association of Confederate Veterans, whose annual reunion will be held in Nashville, June 22, 23 and 24, has been agreed upon.

The rates at hotels, restaurants and boarding houses are the lowest ever offered; and for meals, in numbers of instances, the price has been reduced from 20 to 25 per cent., and good living was never cheaper anywhere. The good people of Nashville have profited by the grave mistakes made at Atlanta and Chicago, and the prevailing sentiment is to keep the people here and induce them to come again, and not to permit them to go home dissatisfied and disgusted. There is no danger of anything running short; the supply whence resources are drawn is unlimited, and the adjoining territory is so rich in all the good things of earth that there will be no appreciable diminution in the stock on hand.

—Toothpicks prepared by nature are a product of Spain and Mexico. A comparatively small plant in Kew Gardens was estimated to have 17,000, and a large specimen in the same place could have had no fewer than 51,000.

—You may soon be able to go from Cairo to the pyramids in (shades of the Pharaohs!) a trolley car.

Qualified Encouragement.

"Young man," said Senator Sorghum, to the protégé who has been promised an appointment. "I shall not congratulate you; but there is one thing I desire to say."

"What is that?"

"If you display anything like the energy and anxiety in filling this position that you showed in getting it, you can't help being a brilliant success."—Washington Star.

MORE ECONOMICAL.

"Say, Mr. Barber, how much will you charge to cut my hair?"

"Twenty-five cents."

"Gee! guess you'd better gimme five cents' wort' of dot hair restorer you use."—Up-to-Date.

The Usual Way.

His love was a lass who, night and morn, Milked a cow with a crumpled horn.

And though the lover was tattered and torn, She vowed she never would leave him forlorn.

But the squire rode by in his one-hoss shay, And fell in love with the rustic fay; He was old, but rich, and the tattered jay Figured second best man on her wedding day.

—H. G. Taber, in Philadelphia Press.

Her Faithless Vows.

"Before a girl is married she says she is willing to live on a desert island with her loved one."

"Of course; any real woman would feel that way."

"Yes; and after she is married she has to have her mother and sisters with her all the time."—Chicago Record.

Could Not Defend Himself.

"You say the lawyer absolutely refused to defend himself when the charge was made against him."

"He did."

"Well, that was a strange course for him to take."

"He said it would be against his principles for him to make any defense."

"In what way?"

"Why, he claimed that he was too poor to pay himself the retaining fee that he was accustomed to ask, and he couldn't conscientiously appear without one."—Chicago Post.

It's Coming.

They're getting ready for it—For the poets all adore it—That "little Easter bonnet, With the lovely ribbons on it!"

It is coming, it is coming, And their happy harps are humming; And the lyric and the sonnet Soon will grace the Easter bonnet. And the paraphraser witty, In the country and the city—So that nothing may be lost—Will hit off the price it cost!

—Atlanta Constitution.

Necessary Precaution.

Tramp (at kitchen door)—That cake smells temptin'.

Cook—It's some of the cookin' school young leddies made—winty things mixed with forty things.

"I wish I had some."

"Well, O'll give ye a piece if ye'll ate it out doors. O! don't want ye to die in th' house."—N. Y. Weekly.

Not Susceptible.

The Boarder (pausing to rest)—This steak doesn't seem to like me, Mrs. Slim-diet.

The Landlady—How absurd! What do you mean?

The Boarder—Well, I can't make any impression on it, anyway.—N. Y. Journal.

Consolation.

Solo—I shall certainly sue this paper for libel. It calls me a liar, a beat, and a horse thief.

Bolus—You are sure to recover. You know that great principle in law, the greater the truth, the greater the libel.

—Philadelphia Press.

His Hands Would Be Dumb.

Can you keep a secret?" asked the first deaf mute.

"Sure," was the reply of the other unfortunate. "Tell me and my fingers will never so much as breathe a word of it to a living soul."—N. Y. Journal.

A DISCORD IN THE CONCERT.

Consulting Surgeon—What is the matter here?

House Surgeon—This is a man who ate the first dumpling his wife ever made.

Consulting Surgeon—Um—he seems pretty weak. I guess we'd better not probe for the dumpling yet awhile.—N. Y. Truth.

Papa Sized Him Up.

"If you marry sister I know that you will give me a bicycle," said Tommy to the evening caller.

"Why this confidence, my boy?"

"Because papa says you have more kinds of wheels than any other young fellow that comes here."—Detroit Free Press.

To Save Her Features.

"Mrs. Tompkins wants to borrow your football mask."

"Gracious—what does she want with it?"

"She has to help Mr. Tompkins take off his porous plaster."—Detroit Free Press.

Set 'Em Up Again.

Tippler—I can tell you that it is pretty hard work keeping one's head above water these days.

Rippler—Yes! I should judge so by the color of your nose.—N. Y. Tribune.

Others Were Sad, Too.

"I'm saddest when I sing," she warbled, in agonized tones.

"There are others," was the inelegant reply of young Sawyer.—Tit-Bits.

An Infallible Standard.

Brown—Do you think you can judge a man by the kind of shoes he wears?

De Flyppe—I always judge a girl's father in that way.—Town Topics.

Charming Advice.

She—The doctor says that kissing must go.

He—Well, here goes.—Yonkers Statesman.

Her First Thought.

Benham—The wolf is at the door.

Mrs. Benham—Tell him to wipe his feet.—N. Y. Truth.

The Cause of the Trouble.

First Boarder—Is he dissatisfied with the board?

Second Boarder—Of course; but he isn't leaving on that account. He and the landlady ride different wheels, and they have quarreled.—Brooklyn Life.

What He Needed.

Doctor—You want some strengthening medicine.

Mr. Mulligan (emphatically—O! do that, doctor. Shure, my wolve is much stronger than O! am, an' she beats me cutnerefully!—Fun.

PITY THE POOR MAN.

"She married to spite somebody, I believe."

"Whom; do you know?"

"I don't know, but it looks as if it was her husband.—Harlem Life.

Courtesy.

The acme of politeness was reached by a mining superintendent who posted a placard reading "Please do not tumble down the shaft."—Melbourne Weekly Times.

The Vernal Martyr.

The poet's ardor never flags. He sweetly sings of bird and bloom, While maids with pails and scrubbing rags Pursue him round from room to room.

—Chicago Record.

The Exact Location.

Dollie—Was it a quiet spot where you kissed Mollie?

Chollie—No; it was on the mouth.—Yonkers Statesman.

Fiction Pure and Simple.

"What I Told My Wife" is the title of a new book. It is almost needless to say that it is fiction.—Tit-Bits.

